(c) if so, the steps taken by Government for helping such children to get rid of such exploitation, giving details of children rehabilitated in the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) and (b) The Government are aware that a large number of children, for whom education should be a priority, are engaged in the practice of begging.

(c) Beggary, including begging by children is sought to be prevented through enactment of legislation by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, a Central Act, also provides for penal action against persons employing or using children for the purposes of beggary. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment also implements a Central Scheme called 'An Integrated Programme for Street Children'. The Programme provides shelter, nutrition, health care, education and recreation facilities to street children and seeks to protect them against abuse and exploitation including forced beggary. The number of children covered under the Programme during 2001 -02 and 2002-03 was 24,472 and 37,195 respectively.

Private Partnership in drinking water sector

*107. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that five global corporates are ready to tap over $2000 million market of drinking water in the country;

(b) whether Government have encouraged the private partnership in the drinking water sector; and

(c) whether it is a fact that if privatisation of drinking water is allowed, the urban dwellers would have to pay at least ten times more for drinking water?

THE MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION (MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) Urban water supply is a State subject. The global corporates are operating or competing for bids through State Governments directly.

(b) Although there has been progressive improvement in the coverage of urban population with water supply and sanitation facilities, there is substantial need for further improvement in the coverage both in terms of quantity and quality. The 10th Plan document (2002-07) has projected a requirement of Rs. 53,719.60 crore for urban water supply and sanitation, whereas the actual availability of resources for the sector would be much less. In view of budgetary resource constraints and the need for improving service delivery to meet the growing demands in urban area, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation has been sensitizing the State Governments and Union Territories through workshops and seminars on the need for undertaking urban sector reforms. The guidelines are advisory in nature. The decision to enter into participation with private sector is that of the State Government and Government of India only plays the role of a facilitator.

(c) In case of privatisation of drinking water in a city, it is envisaged that the service delivery of water supply would improve considerably both in terms of quantity/number of hours of water supply and quality.. Service delivery to vulnerable sections would also improve. Consequently, urban dwellers would have to pay realistic tariffs to cover the cost of services delivered. Establishing an independent regulator, viable and affordable tariffs and ensuring access of water supply to the vulnerable sections would have to be ensured by the States, for which they are being sensitized.

Janani Suraksha Yojana

*108. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in order to tackle the problem of maternal mortality Government have started a new programme called "Janani Suraksha Yojana";

(b) if so, its aims and objectives; and

(c) the action Government propose to take if a pregnant woman does not register with a Primary Health Centre?